

Meet The Cohasset Maple Syrup People

By Joanne Young

The Robert Barrow, Noel Ripley and Chartis Langmaid families have something in common. Their pancakes or waffles are very special because they are eaten with homemade maple syrup.

Their methods of preparing maple syrup differ only in the boiling — Chartis uses her electric stove, Noel his indoor Jotul wood-burning stove and Bob an outdoor 35-gallon sterilized oil drum cut in half.

Robert Barrow, the genial janitor at Cohasset High School, undertakes the most ambitious project. At his Arrowwood Road home he taps forty Black and Red Maple trees on his and his neighbor's property. Sugar Maples are rare in Cohasset, and are distinguished by plates of bark on their trunks.

The red maples have red buds in the spring. Before the sugaring season begins, he carves 5/8 inch dowels from the limbs of a maple tree, tapers and drills a hole using equipment at the high school shop. The dowels are driven 1/2 inch into the trees with a hammer, and attached to a



hole cut into gallon plastic containers, capped to keep out the rain.

This year the flow began after the February 24th cold snap and lasted for about a month. Sap needs cold nights and warm days to freely flow. Bob's trees yield two full containers in one day. Mr. Barrow and his daughter Sarah pour the contents of six buckets into the drum, which boils all day and night. Bob gets up at 5:30 in the morning to fuel the fire, and adds more wood at lunchtime. He places coal on the fire to keep it

burning through the night. He estimates he used one quarter cord of wood this season.

It takes two days of boiling thirty gallons of sap to make one gallon of maple syrup. It is not practical to make maple sugar candy, as it must be boiled down again until the syrup is thick and dark, and thirty gallons will produce only one quart of candy consistency. Bob Barrow seals the maple syrup in regular canning Ball jars for his family and their lucky friends. He pasteurizes the syrup by boiling it fifteen minutes in the sealed jars. This year was a short season and his trees produced eighteen quarts of maple syrup.

Noel Ripley's wife Nancy added the information that what is termed Grade A maple syrup is the first run. It is always light in color. Noel mentioned the trees must be at least ten inches in diameter to tap, or there will be no flow. He drills the spiles (or spigots) into his maple trees four inches deep and boiled about forty gallons to get one gallon of syrup. He put up three quarts this year from his two trees.

Chartis Langmaid's method was the most expensive, as she estimated it cost her \$8.00 in electricity to yield one gallon of maple syrup. The sap must be sealed in containers within two or three days of gathering or it will spoil, and have a vinegary taste.

We can attest to the superior quality of homemade maple syrup, as Bob Barrow generously gave us a bottle of his delicious product. Aunt Jemima, move over! Even Vermont Grade A tastes nothing like this!



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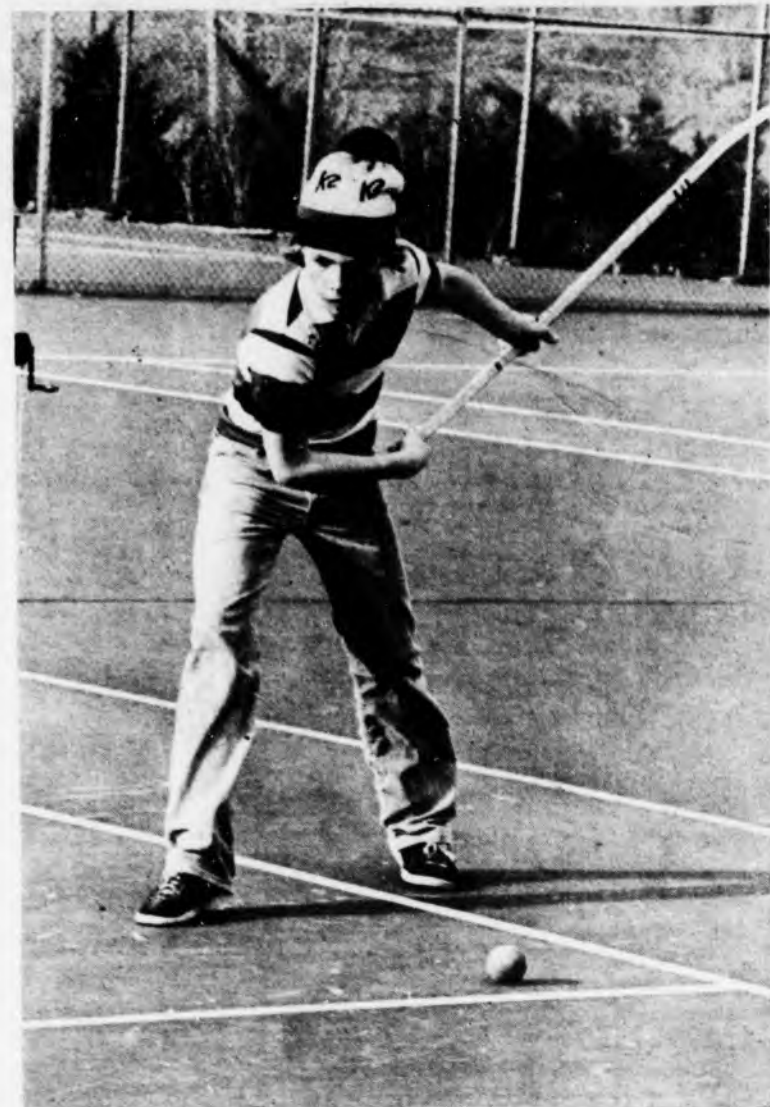
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Sam Roebuck, 12, of Beechwood St. winds up for slapshot during game of street hockey behind Cohasset high School.

Home Health Program

Home Health agencies from the South Shore including those representing Braintree, Holbrook, Randolph, Hingham, Hull, Cohasset, Scituate, Norwell, Milton, Quincy and Weymouth, will sponsor a home health aide preparation program beginning April 23.

It will continue Monday through Friday, 9-1 p.m. for three weeks. Upon successful completion of the course, participants will be certified through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health

as Home Health Aides.

This course is being held in response to an urgent local need for quality care by certified home health aides. Certified graduates have the option of full or part-time local employment through affiliation with the sponsoring agencies. Working hours are flexible, including evening and weekend hours. For example, a person could work four hours a day, four or five days a week.

The curriculum will focus on the family as a whole in its relationship with the one member needing special care at home. It will be concerned with the impact of chronic health problems on the family structure, with problems in adjusting and adapting, with the process of aging, and with ways of giving both physical and emotional help. A limited, supervised clinical experience will be provided.

Information meetings to further explain the course and the role of the home health aide are planned. They will be held in Braintree at the Visiting Nurse Association of the South Shore, 400 Franklin Street, 4th Floor, on Tuesday, April 10 at 10:30 a.m.; and in Hingham at the Hingham Visiting Nurse Association, 170 North Street, on Wednesday, April 11 at 10:30 a.m. Application for the course will take place at this time. There will be a materials fee of \$15.

For further information, please contact one of the sponsoring agencies: Cohasset Social Service League 383-0771; Hingham VNA 749-1160; Hull Board of Health 925-2224; Milton VNA 698-4888; Norwell VNA 659-2342; Quincy VNA 472-2828; Scituate Board of Health 545-1108.

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